

# 'Enchantment' Linaria

*Tough nature, splashy blooms, sweet-smelling — this plant has "Texan" written all over it*

Jimmy Turner

I am truly "enchanted" by this winter annual, and I don't mind being under its seductive spell. Winter-hardy, fragrant, brightly colored and tough-natured — this cool-season plant is one I'll be using for years.

The *Linaria* varieties I've tested in the past, while beautiful, were unable to tolerate our winter freezes. One cold snap, and they were headed for the compost pile.

I was about to give up on the whole genus when wholesale producer PanAmerican Seed Co. released this new variety, promising that it was cold-tolerant, taller and more floriferous. This plant has managed to live up to those promises in our Dallas Arboretum Plant Trials. The last two winters, 'Enchantment' linaria impressed me with its winter-hardiness and flower power. This is one tough plant, and I'm glad to welcome it to our Texas landscapes.

'Enchantment' linaria is best used as a fall- or early spring-planted annual, much as you would use Iceland poppies and snapdragons. 'Enchantment' can take temperatures into the mid-20s and will quickly grow back foliage that has been frostbitten. Flowering will be heaviest in fall and then again in March and April, but don't be surprised if plants are still flowering in June — this plant is quite heat-tolerant, also.

This linaria produces a multitude of small flowers on spiky branches. At maturity, it will reach 18 inches, but won't require staking, as it stays consistently compact. I like Enchantment's upright



Above: Magenta and golden-hued blooms warm up cool-season landscapes.

growth habit in containers and planted in beds behind pansies.

The bright-magenta blooms are accented with pairs of golden petals. This color combination may be a little bright for some of you, but I like it planted in front of the deep-purple foliage of 'Red Bor' kale or mixed with bright-blue or purple pansies for a rich color mix. This plant's vivid hues are striking when planted in masses or to add spark to containers.

If the hardy nature and bold colors of 'Enchantment' don't convince you to plant it, then let your nose do the shopping. The flowers have an incredible fragrance. Use it in containers near doorways so you can enjoy the smell all spring, or cut some to bring indoors — it does wonderfully as a cut flower.

Linaria 'Enchantment' grows best in full sun with well-drained soil. Do not allow it to become waterlogged. When purchasing, be warned that this plant looks much better in the landscape than it does in a small, 4-inch pot — this is a plant that really matures best in the garden. Feed it regularly with a high-nitro-

gen fertilizer to get the best growth and flowering.

This plant so impressed me that I added it to my Plant Trials "Arboretum Approved" list. Only plants that I am absolutely sure will survive in Texas make this list. Hopefully, after you plant it, you'll be as enchanted as I was with this wonderfully fragrant, brightly hued winter annual. ★

**About the author:** Jimmy Turner is Director of Horticulture Research at the Dallas Arboretum and is a regular contributor to this publication. To read more about the Dallas Arboretum Plant Trials program and other "Arboretum Approved" plants, visit [www.dallasplanttrials.org](http://www.dallasplanttrials.org).

## AT A GLANCE

- ◆ Latin Name: *Linaria* x hybrid 'Enchantment'
- ◆ Common Name: toadflax
- ◆ Flowers: spikes of deep magenta with yellow center petals
- ◆ Foliage: medium-green mounds
- ◆ Mature height: 18 inches
- ◆ Hardiness: winter annual
- ◆ Soil: not picky
- ◆ Exposure: full sun
- ◆ Water usage: medium
- ◆ Sources: local nurseries